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20 October 1958

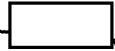


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Copy No. C 59

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 33
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 4-4-80 REVIEWER: 

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State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2002/09/04 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004000330001-0

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II. ASIA+AFRICA

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Morocco: The long-expected government reorganization in Morocco may be imminent since the extremist wing of the Istiqlal party is increasingly discontented over the King's [] role and over the cabinet's lack of control of the army and security forces. Although Prime Minister Balafrej is expected to retain nominal leadership of any new cabinet, the left-wing group's influence would increase. Paris has indicated concern at the developing political instability in Morocco and is reconsidering the withdrawal of the remaining French troops--now reported to number about 15,000. []

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Lebanon: Despite the political compromise which temporarily ended the Lebanese rebellion, the UAR-controlled Radio Free Lebanon, which broadcasts from Syria, now is calling for "complete and decisive victory" by the pro-Nasir

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DAILY BRIEF

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faction. Its demands include dissolution of Parliament and "punishment" of pro-Chamoun leaders after "evacuation of the American forces." The broadcasts will strengthen Christian suspicions that the UAR plans Moslem domination of Lebanon.

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Libya: Western oil companies in Libya, where the prospects for additional oil discoveries are good, are being increasingly harassed by the Libyan oil workers' union and by government officials. There is also growing criticism of the companies by the press and people.

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III. THE WEST

Cuba: Intensified rebel operations in central and western Cuba as well as in rebel-infested Oriente Province are apparently part of a build-up aimed at fulfilling rebel vows to sabotage the national elections scheduled for 3 November.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Pressures Growing for Reshuffle of Moroccan Government

25X6 Discontent with the present Moroccan Government, including the King's [] position, has grown to such an extent among left-wing elements in the dominant Istiqlal party that the well-informed Tunisian ambassador believes the long-anticipated cabinet reshuffle is imminent. The ambassador expects moderate Prime Minister Balafrej to retain his office, but believes Istiqlal extremists like Ibrahim, Ben Barka, and Bouabid will increase their influence in the cabinet. []

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Istiqlal extremists are particularly critical of the cabinet's lack of control over the army and security forces, which are under the King's jurisdiction. Their request for a change in this control was rejected by the King recently after the issue was highlighted by the anti-Istiqlal activities of a rival party in the Rif mountain area. Istiqlal leaders consider that the director of national security was slow in acting against this party's terrorism. They also accuse him of playing off one Istiqlal faction against another.

Paris is concerned over the growing political instability in Morocco and is reconsidering the withdrawal of the remaining French troops, recently reported to number 15,000. France fears that if public order is not assured, the sizable French colony and its interests will be endangered. French failure to continue troop withdrawals would, in the opinion of the American ambassador, be interpreted by Rabat as intransigence and signal a "marked deterioration in Franco-Moroccan relations in the immediate future." []

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Increasing Harassment of Western Oil Companies in Libya

The Libyan Petroleum Workers' Union is stepping up its harassment of Western oil companies. Although the Libyan Government's Petroleum Commission maintains business-like relations with the companies, the union's campaign has made the lower echelons of the bureaucracy--customs, immigration, and tax officials--uncooperative and antagonistic. The companies are also under attack in the Libyan press.

The new but growing Petroleum Workers' Union is capitalizing on the growth of pro-Egyptian sentiment in Libya and the desire of its members to put Libyans in jobs held by foreign employees of the companies. It was organized by Abdul al-Latif Kikhya, a rabid opportunist with a strong grievance against the Western companies, one of which fired him for trying to serve simultaneously as a union official and a company executive.

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Recent successful wildcat oil wells--part of an accelerated exploration program--have raised hopes that Libya might become a significant source of free-world oil, independent of the Nasir-controlled Suez Canal and pipelines through Syria.

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III. THE WEST

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Cubans Rebels Intensify Action to Sabotage 3 November Elections

The rebel "26th of July" Movement, which has vowed to sabotage Cuba's 3 November general elections, already is capable of preventing meaningful elections in Oriente Province and of severely limiting electoral activity in other areas. In Oriente, where a third of the country's population lives, the rebels are in effective control of rural areas and intermittently surround and attack the fringes of the city of Santiago, Cuba's second city. Their activities are intensifying in the central and extreme western provinces, and on or about 15 October a rebel patrol attacked a small army garrison only 20 miles from the Cuban capital, thus for the first time extending the fighting to Havana Province.

The rebels publicly have threatened all candidates who do not withdraw by 30 October and already have killed several. The rebel radio announced on 17 October that prorebel workers would meet soon in rebel territory to plan strikes coordinated with rebel action to prevent the elections. Rebel efforts to promote a general strike failed last April.

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President Batista remains determined to hold the elections, though the political atmosphere will require continued suspension of civil rights, and polling places may have to be established within army garrisons in many places. Denying the validity of the elections, the rebels intend to continue fighting, if necessary, even after Batista leaves the presidency at the end of his term next February.

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